(c) if so, the details thereof and present status of progress of this project; and

(d) if not, the reasons for not releasing sufficient funds for this project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Yes, Sir. Attempts are being made at IICT in association with Centre for Research and Medical Entomology, Madurai to develop a software to forecast the Japanese Encephalitis (JE) incidence. These attempts are confined to JE.

(b) Yes, Sir. Adequate funds have been provided for the study by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

(c) The project will cost a total of Rs. 24.50 lakhs for a period of 3 years and the studies are expected to be completed by the end of March, 2006.

(d) Does not arise.

Development of improved gene of rice by Delhi University

799. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Department of Molecular Biology, Delhi University has developed "improved genes" in a rice plant;

(b) if so, the details of the research carried out; and

(c) how it would help in increasing the yield per acre?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOI OGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) The Department of Plant Molecular Biology, University of Delhi, South Campus, New Delhi has not developed any improved genes in rice plant. Rather, it has characterized a rice gene *OSISAP1 (Oryza sativa* subspecies *indica* stress-associated protein gene 1) and introduced it into model test plant tobacco for investigation. The expression of this gene was found to be induced by several stress stimuli. The gene was found helpful in developing tolerance against abiotic stresses such as cold, dehydration and salinity in tobacco at seedling stage in experimental laboratory conditions.

(c) In view of (a) & (b) above, question does not arise.